

5
Trade in America
31.

A N
E X A M I N A T I O N

INTO THE
C O N D U C T

OF THE PRESENT
A D M I N I S T R A T I O N ,

From the Year 1774 to the Year 1778.

AND A
P L A N O F A C C O M M O D A T I O N

W I T H
A M E R I C A .

BY A MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT.

L O N D O N :

PRINTED FOR J. ALMON, OPPOSITE BURLINGTON-
HOUSE, PICCADILLY. MDCCLXXVIII.

NOT A MOUNTAIN



NOT A MOUNTAIN

A N
E X A M I N A T I O N

Into the CONDUCT of the present

ADMINISTRATION, &c.

THE state of the contest with our North American Colonies, and the commencement of hostilities with France, must afford a melancholy prospect to every well-wisher of Great Britain. Our bad success, during the progress of that contest, has, by many people, been ascribed to the want of public virtue among us, and to that luxury and dissipation which are so universally prevalent. But whoever considers the vigorous exertions, made by Great Britain, during the last war, will hardly suppose, that in a period of less than twenty years, she could have undergone so total a change of manners, as to have produced such different fortune in the present one. This consideration, I am afraid, will lead us to impute some part, at least, of our present misfortunes to the conduct of Ministry; the stile and character of which appear so very
B different

different from that which was exhibited in the last war. In this view of the matter, an enquiry into the conduct of Administration, at this critical period, together with some reflections on the present state of affairs, may, it is hoped, require no apology.

It is almost needless to go farther back in the history of the American question, than the beginning of the present Parliament. The only measure of the last Parliament, which I shall take notice of, is the Boston Port Bill, and this bill seemed so proper a retaliation for the offence, that it struck no party, either as very absurd or very severe *. It was a punishment too which was at an end whenever the offenders should cease to offend, and make reparation; but it was a punishment which could not fail to irritate the New England provinces at least, and therefore should have been followed either by a force sufficient to have conquered that obstinacy, or by a total dissolution of the claim which caused the difference between this country and America. Neither of these ways being

* There was no debate in Parliament at the commencement of this bill, and not much in the course of it. In so much that Mr. R——, whose memory retains fast hold of all such Minority slips, has not been backward in putting Opposition in mind that they forgot their friends at that time.

pursued,

pursued, the event has proved as hurtful to the purse, as it has been mortifying to the spirit of the nation.

At the beginning of this Parliament, a number of papers, containing facts without opinions, were laid before both Houses, and, after due time given to peruse them, resolutions were formed, as the groundwork of our conduct with respect to America. These resolutions, however, were adhered to but for a moment; and while Administration were holding forth all the terrors of prohibitions to trade, prohibitions to fishing, and alteration of charters *, with one hand, they dealt out with the other a system of reconciliation, completely nugatory in its end, by giving up the idea of taxation, upon a quibble, and necessarily ruinous in its consequences, by conveying to the Colonies the strangest symptoms of our fear and irresolution. The hopes of any good effect from this conciliatory plan were soon at an end, and the reception it met with in America, was exactly what any prudent Minister ought to have foreseen. This reception banished

* Never was a measure of State worse timed than the Massachusetts's Charter Bill. It might have been necessary when America had submitted, but in the midst of popular tumult, to enrage, by changing the most favoured system of Colony government, was surely bad policy.

all our ideas of reconciliation, and it became necessary that the rights of this country over America should be decided and maintained by the sword. How far our conduct in the field has been superior to that in the senate, I will leave the event to declare. I pretend not to any knowledge in military affairs, and will not be rash enough to condemn any General unheard ; but I cannot help thinking there is sufficient reason to affirm, that want of vigour and decision in our councils, was the FIRST and great cause of our misfortunes in America.

Since the first dawning of regular liberty in this country, those who took any concern in public affairs have been divided into parties ; and it has uniformly been imputed to that party who were out of power, that their opposition to government proceeded from their desire of obtaining the places of those who directed affairs. But whatever may be the justice of this imputation, it is to be observed, that the party that opposed Administration have generally founded their opposition upon popular topics, and have secured the voice of the nation upon their side : and unless when the people have been flattered by the glory of a successful war, there are but few examples, in the history of this country, of unsuccessful Ministers and an unpopular

unpopular Opposition. Even with this aid they have often been baffled ; but without it, they have never been successful. In this manner the ruin of Lord Godolphin and the Duke of Marlborough, with the establishment of Harley and St. John, was accomplished. The same aid helped to ruin them in their turn. To this we may ascribe the fate of Sir Robert Walpole, though, like Samson, he contrived to pull the edifice about the ears of those who had plotted his ruin ; and to this also we must attribute the appointment of Lord Chatham to that situation, which enabled him to acquire so much glory to the name of Britain and the name of Pitt. It was reserved for the present Opposition to reject the policy of their predecessors, and adopt a system the reverse of what has been mentioned. That, in common with the rest of mankind, it is their ambition to get into power, it were folly to dispute ; that they have erred in the means, it were blindness not to see. That they may have been conscientious in their intentions, their neglecting the proper means to ensure success may be considered as a proof. That the end has been unfortunate, not to say worse of it, the situation of this country must, for ever testify. It has been acknowledged, by the most sanguine minded among them,
that

that the defence of American liberty was unpopular *, yet they have uniformly persevered in declaiming in favour of that liberty; and while the torrent of popular rage was ready, at every moment, to burst out against our Ministers for their ill conduct, the people could repose no confidence in the Minority, whose principles they abhorred. Had the importance of the names of Wentworth and Cavendish, aided by the abilities of a Fox and a Burke, overlooked the abstract question of American taxation, and considered merely the conduct of the war; had they thought means, perhaps not perfectly consistent with their opinion, justifiably used in removing men, whose conduct they deemed hurtful to the constitution; they might, before this time, have given a final blow to the power of an irresolute and unsuccessful Administration.

At the beginning of the fourth session of this Parliament, the news of the defeat and surrender of Burgoyne's army arrived. The dismay that was painted on every countenance on the news of this event, is hardly to be described. It was, perhaps, not unnatural, but it exhibited an ill omen of our national spirit. Britain has seen the

* Mr. Fox has again and again allowed that the American question was unpopular.

day when her expressions of grief would have been otherwise. She would have felt for the brave and generous men that suffered the disgrace of a surrender in her cause; but she would have strove, with a stern and undaunted countenance, to have avenged herself upon the enemy. Nor was the dismay upon this occasion confined to the multitude, who, unaccustomed to resources and expedients, are easily elated, and easily depressed. On the evening when that intelligence was made public in the House of Commons, his Majesty's Ministers betrayed as much dejection as the most inexperienced and ignorant member of that House. He must be hard hearted and unfeeling indeed, who will deny that this disaster was a fit subject of concern. But he must be equally unskilled in the symptoms of vigour in a state, who will assert, that the loss of three thousand men was matter of dismay and dejection to the first Ministers of Great Britain, who ought to be acquainted with the resources of the country they govern. The cause of this inexcusable excess of terror and apprehension must lie either in their ignorance of the resources of this country, or in their own characters.

Their ignorance of the resources of Great Britain on this occasion, may be fairly presumed, when we consider the want of information

formation which they have betrayed during the whole course of the American contest. To go no further back in the history of the present Administration than the first disturbances at Boston, and the subsequent opinions upon those disturbances. Did the Ministry form an idea to themselves, that that riot was a symptom of dissatisfaction in the minds of the people, that was to be conquered only by a resolute and early application of force? Did they know that the people of New England had been for a series of years providing themselves with arms and ammunition? Did they not, on the contrary, flatter themselves, either through ignorance or indolence, or both, that a mere penal Bill*, unsupported by vigorous conduct, was to allay all the heat and rancour of those exasperated republicans? Did they not admit of the British troops under General Gage encamping on Boston Common? A low situation, commanded by all the adjacent grounds, while they should have encamped on the heights of Dorchester, commanding all the adjacent country†. Did they not give it as a rea-

* Vide Boston Port Bill.

† I should not have thought this imputable to Administration, if I did not now find that the Cabinet in London issued orders to their General for their particular conduct. Vide General Clinton's letter to Lord G. G. July 5, 1778.

son for going to New-York, that we should find a great and powerful party in our favour? To what corner of the world did that party fly when we got there? Did they not assure us that General Burgoyne was to find the same friendly conduct in passing down Hudson's River? Did he find any person that bore the aspect of a friend? Have we not been told of the friendship of the province of Quebec? And does not every one know upon what a precarious tenure that province has been, and is now held? A long list could still be added, to shew their want of proper information respecting America; but the event sufficiently proves it, without a farther enumeration of particulars. Their knowledge of European events has been equally remarkable. The French treaty was begun, concluded, and sent to America, and for ought we know, the first knowledge our Ministers had of it was when it was notified to Lord Weymouth by the French Ambassador *.

The measures taken by Administration upon the surrender of General Burgoyne's army, were as ill adapted to call forth the resources of the country, as the dismay

* Lord North denied positively his knowledge of any such thing, when taxed with it by Mr. Fox the night of the debate upon the Conciliatory Bills.

which they exhibited on that occasion betrayed mis-information and weakness. Since the beginning of this year, there have been added to the establishment twelve new regiments; two in England, one in Wales, and nine in Scotland; in all 12,000 men; whereof 3500 may have been raised in England and Wales, 7500 in Scotland, and suppose the other 1000 in Ireland, smuggled over. The effect of this policy has been, to raise levy money to an exorbitant sum, to ruin the recruiting of the old regiments, and damp the spirit of officers, by their seeing many who have never served put over their heads.

It were to be wished, that some method had been taken less hurtful to the service, and better calculated to answer the purpose in point of expedition. What suggests itself on this occasion is, that each parish should furnish a certain quota. Had an Act passed last session of Parliament, upon the news of General Burgoyne's surrender, which was in December, to oblige each parish in the kingdom to send, at a medium, two able-bodied sound men, we might have had * two and twenty thousand

* There are 11,000 parishes in Great Britain; 10,000 in England, and 1000 in Scotland: it might perhaps be thought too much for England to spare 20,000 from industry; therefore let $1\frac{1}{2}$ go from England, and $3\frac{1}{2}$ from Scotland.

men to ingraft upon the old corps, (and thus become much sooner soldiers) in less time than the necessary warrants for the new levies could have passed through the War-Office. For what reason some such system as this was neglected, I cannot pretend to determine. That the Bill would have suffered opposition in passing through the Houses of Parliament, we may conjecture from the disposition of the Minority with respect to America. But did the new levies and * *Benevolences* pass unnoticed. No superiority in point of argument, it is true, could be greater than what the Ministry enjoyed on the last of these questions. Yet it would not have been more remarkable than they might have had on the Bill alluded to. There is no parish in the kingdom that will think it a hardship to give up two or three men fit enough to be soldiers, who are but indifferent members of society in their civil capacity. And there is, perhaps, more real humanity in this method, than in the trick and tyranny that has accompanied the new le-

* In a very learned and able debate in the House of Commons, ushered in by Mr. Dunning, it was attempted to be proved, that the voluntary subscriptions for raising men were of the nature of Benevolences. But the superiority of sound and plain argument upon the part of the Crown lawyers, in opposition to strained ingenuity, clearly shewed the futility of this supposition.

vies. The first in the capitals, the second in the distant provinces.

The consternation of our Ministers, upon the fate of Burgoyne's army, was at last productive of the most pusillanimous and ruinous measure that ever disgraced the annals of any nation. The measure I allude to, it must be easily perceived, was that of the bills brought into Parliament, relinquishing, implicitly and in direct terms, the power of taxation, appointing Commissioners to treat with Congress, and repealing all those acts of coercion and restraint, that it had been the business of the two first sessions of this Parliament to enact. That no offer of concession should have come from this country at any time, and in any circumstance, has been the opinion of many. That less might have been exacted than what we originally demanded from America, had she proposed an accommodation with us, appears highly reasonable. But if ever an offer was to be made by this country to America, that it should not have been made in the hour of disaster, cannot, I think, be disputed. The proper occasion for any such offer would have been when some signal success justified our mercy, not when a signal misfortune operated upon our fears. All these views, however, were disregarded, and
after

after an expence of blood and treasure, that must, for ever, bear heavy on this country ; the whole object of the war was to be yielded up at the single moment when it must appear the effect of force and terror. And the men who were to * *have America at their feet*, who were to accept of nothing less than † *unconditional submission*, were the men who had the confidence to propose this system of absolute concession.

It is an unpleasant task to discover additional misfortunes to those who are already unfortunate, but it must be the task of any person who pretends to examine into the present state of public affairs. That the loss of America is sufficient to fill up the measure of misfortune to this country, every one will readily allow. That an encroachment, however, upon the most sacred and most necessary rules of the Constitution, is yet a worse evil than the loss of the trade and territory of America, will hardly be doubted. As far as freedom is preferable to riches and extent of territory, so far is the loss of America an evil inferior to the ruin of the Constitution.

It is universally understood, that it is the business of the Minister to conduct the

* Lord North's expression.

† Lord George Germaine's.

executive part of Government, without the intervention of Parliament. Nothing can be more wise, because nothing can be attended with greater safety than this rule. The Minister is answerable for his conduct to the nation; the dread of a parliamentary impeachment keeps him in awe, and it is therefore the business of Parliament not to screen him from punishment, by a previous approbation of his measures.

When a measure is laid before Parliament by the Minister, their opinions, concerning the expediency of it, must, in a great measure, be formed according to his representation of the matter; because it cannot be supposed, that the members have received sufficient information from any other quarter. The approbation of Parliament, therefore, (even without any supposition of undue influence) may be generally expected as a thing of course; and while it removes from the Minister all apprehension of a future enquiry, it can afford, to the nation, no security with respect to the propriety of the measures approved of.

During the American contest, however, the Minister has had address enough to make every measure of ordinary execution, a measure of legislation. If we had had a war with France, or any foreign nation,
would

would an application have been made to Parliament to sanctify every step that may have been expedient, and while we protected the Minister in his conduct, ruined the cause by delay. No body ever thought it necessary that persons should be appointed by Parliament to treat concerning a peace with a foreign power; yet the commission to Lord Howe and his brother received a parliamentary sanction. They might, with the same propriety, have brought a bill into Parliament to appoint our Generals and Admirals.

This conduct I look upon as highly dangerous, and as deviating from one of those rules of government most essential to the Constitution. It is true that there is no law to prevent the Minister from coming to Parliament in this manner, as there is a law to prevent troops being raised in the time of peace, without the consent of Parliament; but it is the more necessary, on that account, for Parliament, to reject all such applications.

Besides the greater caution is necessary in guarding against this abuse, because it is introduced upon plausible pretences. For while the Minister is counteracting the usual forms of Government, he is flattering the power to which he applies. It looks like a deference upon the part of the executive
power

power to the judgment of the legislative, which must be agreeable to the latter. In the present case, the flattery has gone still farther; it has been said, that the dispute with America was peculiarly the cause of Parliament. The Americans had not called in question the authority of the Crown, but had refused to submit to the legislative authority. It became, therefore, both decent and requisite, that Parliament should be consulted in every step, both legislative and executive. But I hope Parliament, upon future occasions, will see the matter in a different light, and will give no concurrence to a mode of procedure so dangerous to the Constitution; as the dread of parliamentary enquiry is the only effectual circumstance to secure a proper and prudent exertion of the executive power.

Another circumstance respecting the conduct of the present Ministry seems worthy of particular attention. From the earliest periods of our history, the Minister has uniformly been looked upon as accountable for the whole executive part of government. Since the enjoyment of a certain and well regulated liberty, when a system of public measures has been to be changed, the prelude has always been a change of Ministers. It has been regarded as improper for the same men to undo what they themselves

themselves have been doing, and as contrary to the interest of the country, for those men to remain in power, who have been, in their own acknowledgement, acting to the hurt of the community. When peace was to be made, at the beginning of this century, the power of Marlborough and Godolphin gave way to that of Oxford and Bolingbroke. When war was to be conducted with vigour, the timid and peaceful conduct of Walpole, was forced to give way to the warlike disposition of his enemies. Nor was Lord Chatham, though he conducted the war with glory, thought a fit person to make peace. During the early disputes respecting America, they were not the same men who enacted and repealed the Stamp Act*. It was reserved for the present Ministers to shew a new example of effrontry to the world, to change in a moment their favourite system, without a single change in the councils of his Majesty, and to remain in the plenitude of power, while they adopted the very language of Opposition. When blunder had reduced them to despair of carrying their

* I do not mean to say, that no state intrigue and private machination had any place in these changes, nor that a Minister who has conducted a war is unfit to restore peace, all I want to prove, my proposition is, that till aided by change of public measures, those machinations have been ineffectual.

system into execution, they shewed, that rather than quit the contemptible emoluments of office, they would give the lie to all their former conduct. That nothing but the emoluments of office, could have induced them to have changed their opinion and kept their places, all who saw and heard them, on the day their new propositions were ushered into the House of Commons, as well as on all future days of the debate on that subject, can testify. To those who did not see or hear them, some explanation may be necessary. The Premier began with an awkward explaining away of former assertions, and finished with a total recantation of former principles. The unseemly appearance which he exhibited, while he afforded such matter of shame to his adherents, and triumph to the opposite party, may be easily conceived. For four years together had that noble Lord been talking high of British dignity, and the necessity of American dependence, upon a very short warning, moved by a disaster that might have been easily repaired *, with only the bare suspicion of a French treaty being concluded †; did he undertake to propose to the most crowded audience, a renunciation of all his former prin-

* Burgoyne's surrender.

† I always take his own declarations in the House of Commons.

ciples,

ciples, condemning either his opinions, as ill-founded, impolitic, and impracticable, or his conduct as the worst designed, the worst directed, and the most inadequate to his end. Upon that night, no person of his party had courage enough to second his propositions, or virtue enough to oppose them. Upon a future occasion, the same awkward appearance was made by some of his coadjutors, while others were contented to retain their emoluments, without exposing their change of sentiments. The noble Lord, who presided over the American department, was particularly observed to sit silent for many days, nor was he prevailed upon till goaded by Opposition and invited by Administration to make a similar recantation of all his former opinions, which perhaps was more awkward in him, because his opinions had been more violent than those of the Minister.

By this wavering conduct our national dignity must have been impaired in the eyes of all the world. If Great Britain, when she totally changed her public measures, had also changed her Ministers, she would no longer have appeared responsible for the opinions or systems of men whom she had discarded from her service. By coming under the direction of a new Ministry, she might have been supposed sensible of

the blunders of the former, and might have afforded the prospect of being actuated by a new spirit. But by retaining her old directors, at the same time that she entirely changed her system of actions, she was made to adopt all their inconsistencies: she was in some measure involved in their disgraces; and she gave her enemies reason to expect, that for the future she would discover the same feebleness, and fluctuation of measures, by which her past conduct had been distinguished.

With respect to the measure of concession proposed on this occasion, if it ought ever to have been adopted, it was not at this time, for the reasons I have given above. But it was not at this time for another reason; because, without victory on our side, it was in vain to expect that America would agree to our terms. Elated with the hopes of a free and independent Empire, and having baffled all our attempts for four campaigns, by the single system of avoiding an action; having formed a Government which answered all the purposes of a state of warfare, in which they were placed; finding resources beyond their expectations, and in the daily hope of support from a great power, hostile in every feeling to Great Britain; was it to be expected, that they who had raised
objects

objects of ambition to themselves, which they looked forward to with all the fervour of an imagination heated by political schemes, would admit of those hopes being at once blasted, and their independence annihilated in a moment? Every thinking man might have seen that it would be the business of Congress to prevent those who might incline to it, from daring to make an offer of accommodation. And every informed man might have known, that in that country, the whole power is in the hands of the Congress. The favourite system of dividing America was therefore vain; and that timid and pitiful policy which has governed Administration during the whole of this question, was now to be baffled a third time*. That the event has been precisely answerable to this conduct, the world is now sufficiently apprised. So that Great Britain, after having become an humble suppliant at the feet of her Colonies, and after having debased herself beyond all example or precedent; after having seen her Constitution violated in most essential articles, her blood and treasure lavished with the utmost prodigality, is now farther from the point she aimed, than she has been during any period of the war.

During the early periods of the Admini-

* The first attempt by the Conciliatory Bill; the second by appointing the Howes Commissioners.

stration

stration of our present Premier, a successful attempt to get the better of popular commotion, gave the nation a high opinion of his abilities. At that time the whole world was at peace, and Great Britain, after a vigorous and successful war, which had raised the glory of her name to unrivalled greatness, had, by extending commerce abroad, and improving the arts at home, increased that greatness to a degree hitherto unknown and unequalled in any age or country. The constitutional questions, which had for some time been agitated, were now forgotten, and the commotions which had arisen upon that account, had entirely subsided. The people of England, cherished in the lap of prosperity, satisfied with the ease and tranquility in which they lived, and unalarmed about any encroachments upon the Constitution, saw nothing to apprehend but the age of the Earl of Guildford, which presented a prospect of calling from his proper situation, the Minister, whose rank, integrity, and abilities, rendered him the fittest person to advise his Sovereign, and direct the nation. With all these splendid and prosperous circumstances around, a storm began to gather in the western hemisphere, which threatened to disturb the serenity of the British sky. The causes of that gloom, and the consequences necessarily arising from it, seemed to call for the attention, and
ought

ought to have prompted the exertion of this illustrious Statesman. How well that person, and those whom he had before, and has since added, as co-adjutors in office, have acquitted themselves of that task, the dark, the distressed situation of this country can best demonstrate.

In the year 1774, we were in possession of the whole Continent of America. The first blood that was spilt at Lexington began this fatal history. With what lustre the conduct of a British General shone forth in that affair, the Gazette can tell. The remainder of that summer was wasted within the walls of Boston, with the single exception of the action at Bunker's Hill; with it the extent of our territory was enlarged, and we were allowed to come as far as that neck of land, over which the rebels should not have been allowed to repass, if our ships had been managed with common prudence. In the spring of 1776, after having spent a miserable winter in Boston, our troops were obliged to put to sea, and sailed for the port of Halifax. The summer of this year commenced with sailing for New-York. Upon our arrival in that bay, Staten Island was the only post we could occupy, the campaign, however, began and ended with glory to us, and disgrace to our adversaries. The taking of Long Island and New-York Island, followed

ed each other as fast as we could march to take possession of them; from thence we drove the rebels from the strong and advantageous posts of King's Bridge to the Jerseys, and from thence across the Delaware, with such rapidity, that it was nicknamed, by the army, The Jersey Hunt. They little thought, that with the intervention only of another campaign, they were to be hunted across the same country in their turn, by the men they had so much despised. The beginning of the campaign, 1777, was distinguished by the march of General Howe to take a view of General Washington at Bound Brooke, who, after looking at his right, then at his left, and then at his center, saw no possibility of attacking him; quitting that situation, and covering Lord Cornwallis, who would otherwise have found it difficult to retire, the whole army embarked, and all his Majesty's Ministers, from the First Lord to the lowest runner of the Treasury, declared themselves equally ignorant of their destination*. After many weeks
of

* It is observable that their ignorance was entirely feigned, for a letter from Sir William Howe to Lord George Germain, dated, New-York, 2d April, 1777, and received 8th May, inclosing one from Sir William Howe to General Carleton, says, "As I shall probably be in Pennsylvania, when that corps is ready to advance into this province, it will not be in my power to communicate with the officer commanding it, so soon as I could wish." It is not the business
of

of suspense, we heard of their landing in Cheesapeake Bay. With the same superiority of military discipline that displayed itself in the campaign of 1776, they made themselves masters of Philadelphia and the adjacent country; and had they had a few hours more day-light at Brandywine *, the whole rebel army must have surrendered to them. After keeping possession of Philadelphia a whole winter, the policy of our Ministers, perhaps very wisely †, required, that they should quit that station and go to New-York. That the General displayed great abilities, the troops great bravery, and great fortitude, every one must allow; yet, after all, it deserves the name of a retreat, nay the enemy have come off so as to construe the action they had with our troops into a victory, and the Congress

of these thoughts to discuss the points of, whether Howe should have waited for General Burgoyne, and co-operated with him. If I am to give an opinion, it is, that wisdom should have directed his stay; but it is no apology for the Minister's persisting in a shabby falsehood for months, the apology that Ministers should not dictate to a Commander in Chief, is at an end, they have dictated to General Clinton.

* See the Gazette account.

† It surely was a fortunate, perhaps a wise order, that made our army quit Philadelphia at the time they did; had they remained a short time longer, they must inevitably have fallen a prey to D'Estaing. Yet I can never attribute any degree of merit to the Ministry for taking so obvious a step: it was the only one that remained, after having allowed of a possibility of D'Estaing's visiting that coast.

E

have

have publickly thanked General Washington on the occasion. Is there a man that would believe that the troops that spread themselves over the Jerseys, from Elizabeth-town to Trenton, in 1776, were to be obliged to march across that country, in the manner of a retreat, and with difficulty save their baggage, in the year 1778, for ought Ministry knew to run the risque of being cooped up in New-York in the same manner they were in Boston, without a possibility of acting decisively, or perhaps, what might be more prudent, of quitting the country with security. If such has been the fate of a war, waged against a people who are not yet formed into a nation, whose arts of government were yet to learn, and whose resources were unknown and uncertain. What are we to hope from the same men waging a war against a great and powerful Empire, old in every art of government, acquainted with every mode of resource, skilled in every means of attack and principle of defence.

But the abettors of ministerial management will say, the question with America was very different from the question with France; the delicacy and novelty of the former case made it necessary to be extremely cautious, lest we should irritate those into revolt whom we only meant to chastise for disobedience.

disobedience. Without entering into the merit or demerit of this sort of policy (which I have already in some measure discussed) or endeavouring to shew, what must immediately occur to every one; that if that was the proper system at the beginning, it could not continue so in every successive campaign in America. I shall, after having examined the conduct with respect to America for four successive years, beg leave to touch upon the conduct with respect to France in hardly a greater number of months. Without entering into the inexcusable ignorance of the French treaty, I shall proceed to what more properly relates to their conduct respecting the war. It appears from the papers laid before the House of Commons, that the most perfect information was given to Ministry relative to the fitting out and sailing of the Toulon squadron. Such information as might have warranted them to take steps that might have effectually prevented that squadron from crossing the Streights of Gibraltar, and perhaps have crushed the American treaty in its earliest bud. Yet, instead of taking this obvious method of checking in the beginning all attempts of the French to succour America, they chose to let that fleet sail, upon the idea that they might punish him in the Atlantic, whom they did not choose to stop

in the Mediterranean; and instead of preventing the mischief he was to do, to call him to account for the mischief he should have done. That this is unlike the practice of all former Ministers, few people will venture to deny. When an enemy was certainly to be met with in a calm and placid sea, where any addition to his strength could easily be prevented, where there was no risk in the voyage, and no difficulty in supplying a fleet with every requisite for that voyage; it was surely obvious, that our fleet should have been sent to the Mediterranean, to check Monsieur D'Estaing in the beginning. Not to the Atlantic, where there was an uncertainty of finding him; a probability, or rather a certainty, of his being joined by additional numbers, where the ocean was boisterous, and the necessaries for the voyage very considerable: and where the presence of our fleet could not be insured, till every thing for our destruction, and the advantage of our enemies, might have been compleated.

But I shall be told upon this occasion, has not D'Estaing been baffled in all his attempts to succour America, and is not our fleet and army still existing in safety on that coast? It is upon this state of the question I wish to argue at present.

How does the fact stand upon the last account from America? Lord Howe sails
for

for the protection of Rhode-Island; whither D'Estaign had gone to favour an attack of the rebels upon that quarter. What ensues? D'Estaign quits the harbour of Rhode-Island on the appearance of the English fleet; Lord Howe finding that the French fleet is too strong for him to attack, without having the weather gage of them, very wisely attempts to gain it. During this attempt a storm arises: both fleets are dispersed: and after having given an opportunity of proving what all the world allows, and what encreases a thousand fold the guilt of our Ministers, that British seamen are the most brave and intrepid characters in the world: Mr. D'Estaign retires to Boston, out of the possibility of being hurt by the additional force that has since arrived at New-York. What is the state of the fact respecting the fleet under the command of Admiral Byron? After having been dispersed by a storm, we find one ship arriving after another, from the 28th of July to the 15th of September, and a sufficient number not arriving soon enough to admit of their being of any use to Lord Howe against the French squadron. Have we any reason, upon this state of facts, to exult in the wisdom of our Minister? Or have they any cause to boast of the judgment with which they acted to prevent

prevent the mischief D'Estaing might have done? We are indebted to the elements for our safety, but to the Ministers we are indebted for nothing.

The Toulon squadron is the only instance that has yet occurred in the French war, that can give us a proper ground for judging of the conduct of our Ministers. When I say this, I do not mean to pass over the action off Brest. But the world is yet too much in the dark to judge of the real merit of that action. All, therefore, that I shall say is this, that though it does not positively demonstrate the bad conduct, it is a proof of the bad fortune of the Ministers*. The chances upon the cards are pretty equal in favour of every body; and those who do not take advantage of a good hand, must expect to be ruined when they meet with a bad one. The world, therefore, will always conclude, that a person who is in a constant train of losing, must be either an unskilful or an imprudent player. If our Ministers then have been going on in

* There is one circumstance of which Ministers may perhaps avail themselves: the number of captures of the enemy's trade, and the small losses we have suffered. But why they shall be allowed to rob individuals of their fame I cannot see. They, surely, have shewn wonderful exertions in this country; a strong proof of what the country can yet do. But their success reverberates with more force upon Administration, and shews what opportunities they have missed, and what vigour they have left unemployed.

a course of weakness, ignorance, and error, to the ruin of their country ; if they have bereft it of its dignity, and thrown away its interest ; if every measure of conciliation has been too late, and every method of coercion has been ill planned and ill conducted ; and if a removal has become highly expedient, there may still be room for asking this question. If there are men untried, men who have not had an opportunity of proving their misconduct, by the ruin of their country, why should we not call them forth ? We shall certainly have a better prospect under the conduct of men, who, being unknown, have a character to gain, than of men, who, being thoroughly tried, have none to lose.

At the period when this country began to struggle for the freedom she has since attained, those modes of government and systems of influence which have since taken place, were little known. During the whole reigns of the House of Tudor, the Prince filled the offices of state according to his fancy, without any regard to the influence or abilities of those on whom he bestowed them. After the accession of the Stewart family, Parliament acquired more weight in the Constitution, and the Crown found it necessary to employ such Ministers as
were

were most likely to have influence in either House. Since that time this policy of the Crown has been uniformly pursued, and no instances have occurred of a Minister's being continued in power, in opposition to the inclination of Parliament, and to the voice of the nation. I will take the liberty of adding, that this rule is indispensibly necessary to our Constitution; and that whenever it shall be transgressed for any length of time, our free government is at an end. Every body knows the influence which is possessed by the Minister, in the ordinary transactions of Parliament, and perhaps that influence is necessary in order to carry on the business of Government. The only check, however, against the abuses of this ordinary influence, arises from the power of Parliament to procure a change of Administration. Whenever that assembly becomes incapable of exercising that privilege, the influence of the Minister, instead of being confined to ordinary transactions, will be extended to all sort of measures whatever; and the legislative body will, in every case, be brought under the entire direction of the executive.

In the present circumstances of Great Britain, after the series of mismanagements that has happened, when the eyes of the whole world have been opened with respect to the conduct of our Minister; if, after
having

having involved the country in so much distress, by one system of operations, he shall draw upon himself the indignation and contempt of the whole people, and in opposition to the voice of the nation shall still be continued in office, and if Parliament shall not make effectual effort, in order to displace him, the conclusion is evident, It deserves the attention of every Englishman.

Permit me just to hint at another point, which would take too much time to discuss entirely: that in every free government, there is danger in the exercise of the executive power remaining too long in the hands of the same Minister; because the longer he remains in office, and has had an opportunity of encreasing his connections, by Ministerial favour, his influence becomes so much the greater, and the difficulty of displacing, when he comes to deserve it, is proportionably augmented.

Upon the present occasion, therefore, all those who have any influence, or any vote in the government of their country, ought to surmount every obstacle that stands in the way of its safety. They ought to reflect, that the present crisis calls aloud for their assistance: that upon this occasion every motive of private delicacy and private

F attachment

attachment ought to give way to public duty. And that they are bound to exert that virtue, that fortitude, that perseverance, to support that their ancestors exerted to rear the fabric. Let them console themselves with this reflection, that if they act with the virtue and firmness of Englishmen, there is yet enough of strength left in this country to rescue us from the present emergency, and perhaps to re-establish us in that power and dignity which has, in better days, rendered the name of Britain revered throughout the world.

It may be asked, at this period of the subject, and in this situation of affairs, What should be done now? We have tried, without effect, to reduce America by force, and our endeavours to reconcile her by concession, have been equally ineffectual. Are we to enter into a new war with America? Are we to declare them Independent? one of their alternatives; or, are we to withdraw our troops? which is their other alternative. If there existed in this country a single man, whose pre-eminence in experience, wisdom, and firmness, pointed him out to the general sense of mankind, as a fit person to take the guidance of affairs into his hands, whose former conduct had shewn the vigour of his mind in every action, and whose enterprizes had been universally fortunate

tunate, who had heaped glory upon his nation, by the superiority with which he conducted her affairs; who displayed in himself that peculiarity of character that baffled misfortune, because he rejoiced in difficulties; whose personal character and brilliant eloquence made every subordinate intruder tremble at his nod, and whose avowed system it was to make every inferior department subservient to the business of the nation, without daring to give advice; who was, in short, singularly fitted to make a Minister for a war. I should have thought it incumbent on this nation to call that man forth into their service. But LORD CHATHAM is no more, and I am afraid the present age does not furnish out a man capable of carrying any idea of his last speech into execution. That great man did, in the beginning, tend to raise the combustion, that has now well nigh consumed this nation; but, perhaps, he was, for that among other reasons, best calculated to extinguish the flame. What his plan would have been, for carrying on the war, the world has never had unfolded to them; what ought to have been done, it may easily be conceived. It ought to have been conducted with such vigour as to have made the enemy feel the miseries of war and desolation. Instead of permitting what every body allows

it to be, the finest and most high spirited army that ever was led into a field, to languish in quarters. They should have employed it in such a manner as would have forced General Washington to come to an action upon equal terms. In that case, what the event would have been, the few battles we have had in America, upon disadvantageous ground, clearly proves.

But ought we at this period to pursue that method of severity, when France has declared herself the Protector of American rights, and is ready to occupy so great a portion of our national strength and national credit, and when the last of these two articles is so very low? I confess that, zealous as I am for maintaining the supremacy of Great Britain over America, I look upon this at present as impracticable. Would you then declare the Americans independent, in hopes of securing their weight in the scale against France? Having already stooped so low, it may be supposed standing on foolish punctilio not to go as far as they wish: yet, foolish as it may be, I confess I am for standing on that punctilio. I think no governing State should ever by its own act, declare any of its dependencies independent: it is so contrary to the nature of a governing power, so humbling to the pride of a great nation, it must tend so entirely

tirely to annihilate the spirit of a people, and deprive them of that *indescribable something* that supports and cherishes them, that it is a step never to be taken, if it can be avoided. But is it avoidable now? Are not France, Spain, and America, too powerful for Great Britain? And would not Great Britain, in alliance with America, be a match for the other two? Is any one so credulous as to believe, that a declaration of American Independence would produce this alliance*? Is it not probable rather, that, exulting in having forced you to this last step of humiliation, they would tell you, You are still too late. The King of France, our great and good ally, is not to be forsaken by us. He who assisted us in our distress, and brought about the completion of our freedom, can we assist you with our arms against him? You who have attempted to tread upon our privileges, and who have harrassed us by every act of civil and military oppression. We can never think your offer worthy of

* Read the answers of the Congress and the Commissioners. They do not say, Declare us independent, and we will unite with you against France; but, declare us independent, or withdraw your troops, and then we will treat with you; before that, we will have no correspondence with the Commissioners of Great Britain. Suppose them declared independent; suppose the Commissioners received, is there a probability they would enter into any alliance with you?

our consideration, because that which you offer we already possess. We are independent; not because Great Britain declares us so, but because we can maintain our Independence in spite of all your exertions. You are therefore to expect no concession from us for granting to us *de jure*, what we already possess *de facto* *.

It may be said by those who have more regard to the safety than to the dignity of

* The resolution of Congress, Nov. 22, 1777, before any idea of a French treaty existed, may lead us to form a very probable conjecture of what their language will be—

In CONGRESS, Nov. 27.

Congress having received information, that the insidious enemies of the United States of America have endeavoured to propagate false and groundless reports, that a treaty had been held between the Congress and the Commissioners of the King of Great Britain, by which it was probable that a reconciliation would take place:

Be it declared and resolved, "That the Commissioners of the said United States at the several Courts in Europe, be authorized to represent to the different Courts at which they respectively reside, that no treaty whatever has been held between the King of Great Britain, or any of his Commissioners, and the said Independent States, since the Declaration of Independence."

HENRY LAURENS, President.

In CONGRESS, Nov. 22.

Resolved, "That all proposals for a treaty between the King of Great Britain, or any of his Commissioners, and the United States of America, inconsistent with the Independence of the said States, or with such treaties and alliances as shall be formed under their authority, will be rejected by Congress."

HENRY LAURENS, President.

the

the nation ; by those who love peace more than pre-eminence of character; why should we not conclude peace with France, leaving America to become *independent*, and to form a State entirely *separate* from Great Britain? We shall thereby reinstate ourselves in tranquility, and regain all the industry we have lost by the interruption from the American war, and the loss of the American trade. How far this would be the case, I cannot say ; but if it were to be so, the expence at which it must be purchased is such, as this nation can never support. Shall Great Britain calmly abandon all those claims over her Colonies, which she lately held forth to the world; and after they have spurned her authority with every circumstance of insult and disdain, submit to the law which France has been pleased to dictate? This may be agreeable to the sordid and pecuniary interest of Great Britain, but it never can be consistent with the rank which she has long held among the powers of Europe. If she submits to this, she will suffer the finishing stroke of abasement, and upon every frivolous occasion she may expect to be trampled upon by her neighbours, while every future exertion will be damped by her present disgrace. I know that of late the question of America has made one party treat national
dignity

dignity with ridicule, as insignificant and ideal; yet that party disavows that reasoning when the question is changed from America to France; and what may have been ill-founded pride with our Colonies, is just and solid dignity with our enemy. Taking it then for a maxim in politics, from which the nation is never to swerve, That the dignity of the nation is essential to its existence, I must conclude, that a Declaration of Independence to America, involving in it Peace with France as a condition, is never to be thought of.

Having thus far taken the point of honour into consideration, let us now consider the question of interest, and determine from thence what effect American *Independence* and *Separation* would produce upon this country. First, In point of population. Second, In point of territory and trade. Third, With respect to pre-eminence as a naval power.

1. It appears almost a necessary consequence, that if ever America shall possess equal political advantages with this country, it must drain this country of people. In America the price of labour is very high, and the price of land as well as of provisions very low; nor will there be any considerable taxes to diminish the advantages of the one, or increase the disadvantages

vantages of the other. A settlement there is easily and readily made, and every comfort of life easily and plentifully obtained. In this situation it is hardly to be doubted, that the labouring and manufacturing part of Great Britain will flock in crowds to America; inticed not only by the advantages already enumerated, but by the same language and religion, and by that civil and political freedom which this country enjoys, without any of the burthens under which it labours; nor would the evil, great as it may prove, rest here. Many of those whose estates were moveable would be induced to follow the example of the labourer and manufacturer. They would soon learn that their capital would be employed much more advantageously in the new than in the old world; that there money is a rare commodity, affording a high interest if lent out, a great profit if employed in cultivation of land, and an equally great, or greater, if employed in trade. The extensive coast, the number of sea-ports, and of navigable rivers capable of receiving ships of all burthens; the easy rate at which materials can be had for building them; the various commodities, the production of such various climates; all these circumstances must combine to induce those whose capital is moveable to go to America. Besides

G

these

these pecuniary advantages, their ambition and vanity would prompt men to partake of the illustrious situation they might attain to in this new republic. In this country, the different ranks that have been long established, and the inequality of fortune that usually accompanies those ranks, has made a high degree of political power and distinction attainable by very few. The small number whom fortune, or accident, brings forth to public notice, or to extensive influence, are generally themselves either men of rank and fortune, or connected with men of rank and fortune. What would be reckoned only a competency in this country would in America be esteemed affluence, and the possessor of it would be entitled to all the rank and consideration that affluence bestows. The natural tendency, therefore, of the Independence of America, and its total separation from Britain, will be not only to deprive this country of the manufacturer whose labour produces capital, but of the capital which in its turn gives employment to the manufacturer; and though this may not take place by one sudden stroke, it cannot fail to be sensibly felt in a course of years. In what number of years this will happen, the wisest and best calculator will not take upon him to decide; but the shallowest politician may easily foresee

foresee that this country is to feel a diminution of men and capital in an increasing ratio, though that ratio may not be the subject of accurate calculation: and in the end, this country may be left with little more stock than the cultivation of land, and the consumption of those who cultivate it can employ; certainly with no more people than the employment of that stock can maintain. When it shall arrive at this state, or rather in the course of its advancing towards it, the evils which Britain may suffer can hardly be enumerated. The diminution of stock and the diminution of people, must necessarily be followed by a diminution of consumption; the natural consequences of which must be to lower the value of land; and when the value of land is thus lowered, it is impossible that it can maintain the same industry, or, in other words, employ the same stock it did originally; so that the effect of *American Independence and Separation* is not only to deprive us of our useful inhabitants and moveable capital, but to lower the value of our land, and weaken the inducements to cultivate it. The consequence of this, with regard to the prosperity of the nation, is too fatal and too evident to make me wish to dwell upon it. It must so weaken and depress us, both in point of men and

G 2

money,

money, as to render us, if not an easy prey to any foreign power, at least unable to maintain any pre-eminence or dignity. How *Englishmen* will relish the near prospect of this, I leave *Englishmen* to determine.

2. In point of territory and trade. It appears likewise a necessary consequence of American *Independence* and *Separation*, that we should lose our West-India Colonies, and be deprived of Quebec and our Newfoundland fisheries. The vicinity of America to those possessions would surely operate, in some respect, towards bringing about that event. Besides, with respect to the West-Indies, America is, if not the only country that can afford lumber, the country that can afford it cheapest, and it will afford it cheaper and cheaper, in proportion as it shall encrease in numbers of people; because the more land there is to clear, the more they must be able to afford. If the population of America goes on, and the industry of the people bears a proportion to it, they will be able to supply the West-India market with many commodities; a short carriage will render them cheap, and this connection will have its influence in producing an union between them and America. Besides this circumstance, it is so much in the power of America to harraß the West-India trade, that

that our islands will be happy to share in a Government that renders them safe and independent, rather than to remain with this country unsafe and dependent; especially if a reduction of the strength of this country is to be the consequence of American Independence, and a consequent inability to assist them against America. What the effects of this alienation of our West-India Colonies will be, I confess myself too ignorant of the particulars of that trade to be able to calculate. I own I am far from thinking it would be one of the greatest evils attending the *Independence* and *Separation* of America; yet it would be such a one as the present situation of this country is ill calculated to bear. It would withdraw or annihilate the capital of many merchants, who are now engaged in that trade, which, besides distressing the individual merchants, would annihilate the proportion of industry, that capital kept in motion. The manufacturer, therefore, whose commodities supplied the West-India market, must either be deprived of bread, or seek a new vent for his manufacture. And here let me observe again, that every thing conspires to render a declaration of *Independence* and *Separation* in the highest degree favourable to America, and equally unfavourable to us. The loss of the West-Indies,

Indies, by depriving our manufacturers of bread, so far as they were employed in serving that market, must induce them to seek for employment elsewhere. While America, *independent* and *separated*, holds out to him every gratification of free government, a ready merchant, and a high price for his labour.

With regard to our Newfoundland fisheries, the arguments that apply to the West-Indies apply likewise to it, viz. that our fisheries are subject to constant depredations from the American navy, without the possibility of our giving constant assistance. The seas, for a considerable part of the year, prevent us from remaining in that quarter; and if we have no port in the neighbourhood to which we can go, a considerable time must be lost before we can return to the station; besides, the inhabitants of New-England did formerly carry on the greatest part of that trade, and their vicinity renders them again ready to seize upon the first opportunity to drive us from it. As this trade has always been esteemed one of our principal nurseries for seamen, its loss must be very severely felt by a nation, whose principal greatness depends upon her naval force. It is farther probable, from similar reasons, that Quebec would be lost to this country. The inhabitants of
that

that country are, by all accounts, far from being real friends to Great Britain. They have shewn themselves ready, on all occasions, to join the party that was like to prevail. If, therefore, America should succeed, in forming herself into a separate State, there is little doubt but Canada will declare in her favour. Whether Great Britain is able to overawe such a declaration, it is hard to say; if she were, she would hold the dependence of Canada upon a very precarious tenure. If we lose America, we may still, perhaps, retain a channel, through which to circulate our manufactures to the rest of the Continent, by retaining Quebec; and that fertile and extensive province may remain for some time, a valuable dependence of this country. At the same time I greatly dread, that the moment it becomes really valuable, it will have strength enough, with the assistance of its neighbours, to break the chains in which this country may hold it.

3. With regard to our pre-eminence, as a maritime power, it is not necessary here to prove, that Great Britain is the first maritime power of the world; or to remark, that to this pre-eminence, she owes her former greatness. All the world acknowledges this truth, and every Briton feels it. It has ever been, and must always be the
policy

policy of this country to maintain a superiority at sea. Without this, she never can be deemed a formidable nation ; and if any other country shall arise, whose exertions in that way shall outdo those of Great Britain, she may, from that moment, date her fate. If America acquires Independence, and establishes herself a separate and powerful nation, there can be little doubt she will in time outdo Great Britain in all her exertions by sea. In every article but one, she has the advantage of this country. The single one I allude to, is the price of labour. But when we consider that America possesses, within herself, all the materials for ship building, it will not be difficult to conceive, that these advantages will infinitely overbalance the single disadvantage under which she labours *.

The sea-coast of America, from Florida to Canada, is filled with bays, rivers, and creeks, calculated to admit of the finest harbours in the known world, and she already possesses many ports fit for the construction of the first rate men of war. Timber abounds there to a much greater degree

* It is to be observed too, that emigrations from this country will gradually reduce the price of labour, by bringing more labour into the market ; for labour, like any other commodity, is higher or lower according to plenty or scarcity.

than

than in any other part of the globe, and pitch and tar can be produced in the utmost abundance. Hemp is the natural growth of the soil, and iron stone is to be found in great quantities in many parts of that Continent. When unrestrained by the laws of this country, the inhabitants will find but little difficulty in erecting founderies for the making of cannon, and forges for making anchors. Convenient situations for water are not wanting, and charcoal may be had at a very easy rate *. With all these advantages, who can doubt that, in process of time, America, if separated from us, must outdo this country in every maritime exertion, and be ready, on every occasion, to outstrip the splendour of the British navy, once so formidable to every hostile power.

What then is to be done? How is Great Britain, in her present situation, to extricate herself from the difficulties that surround her? There seem to be here but two methods remaining, 1. Either to attempt so to depress America, as to render it impracticable for her to raise her head against this country. Or, 2. To give up all hostility against America for the present, and bend our whole force against France.

* Such establishments would redound to the advantage of America doubly, for nothing clears the land so much as iron works of both kinds, by the consumption of wood.

As to the first, there is in it a degree of cruelty, to which the most resolute minds can hardly bring themselves, and nothing but the last necessity should make us adopt. The second, therefore, seems to be the only means we have left; how far it will be a proper step, we may conjecture with a considerable degree of probability. But before I proceed to this conjecture, I shall very shortly lay down the mode in which I should think it ought to be done.

We ought to remove our troops from every part of America, with the exception of Halifax, Quebec, and St. Augustine. The first to protect our fisheries, and as an excellent port to rendezvous in, and for refitting our ships; Quebec for the purposes above-mentioned, as an inlet for our manufactures to America; and St. Augustine as a near and convenient port for our operations in the West-Indies. Upon withdrawing the troops, I would at the same time withdraw the Commissioners*; and I would publicly declare a suspension of all hostilities with British America, both by sea and land, and that they may trade, without molestation, to what part of the globe they please, unless they shall attempt to make

* Since these sheets went to the press, it is understood that the Commissioners are upon their return.

captures upon our trade, in which case we should retaliate.

After having published a suspension of hostilities, and annulled the Commission, a question occurs, Whether we should repeal the several Acts of Parliament, that have gone by the name of the Conciliatory Bills*. Here, with all the original disposition that any body could possess to tax America, I am clearly of opinion, that those Acts should not again be repealed. First, because there is something weak and contemptible in a legislative body, changing its opinion with every breath of wind. And secondly, because, whatever this country may have been able to do formerly, I think it now impracticable to enforce our claims over America. Relinquishing America, therefore, at present, we ought to apply the whole strength and resources of this country against France.

At the same time that we retain at home a force, equal to what we maintained last summer, to prevent every whisper of invasion, we should, with the army we have in America, garrison our own West-India islands, and make descents upon the French: all the rest of our exertions ought to be made by sea. Express orders ought to be given to all Commanders to engage the French,

* The Bill empowering his Majesty to appoint Commissioners expires on the 1st of June, 1779.

wherever there is a probability of success, together with an absolute authority to take every merchant ship belonging to them. If the public exertions upon the seas equal, or nearly equal, those that have been made by individuals, I can have little doubt, that the French will soon become tired of a war where they must suffer almost on every occasion. For in spite of the action, in the Bay of Biscay, of last summer, I must still consider this country as infinitely superior to the French at sea: and though neither our Ministers, nor the Commanders appointed by our Ministers, have much to boast of, yet, the great exertions of individuals have clearly demonstrated what this nation is capable of doing, if it had men at its head possessed either of spirit or capacity to conduct it. I take it for granted then, that if a naval war is conducted with vigour on the part of this country against France, there is little doubt of our being victorious, and of our reducing that country in a very short time to the necessity of suing for peace. When that time shall come, it is not to be doubted, that the first condition ought to be a renunciation of the American treaty, and an express declaration upon the part of France, properly guarantied to Great Britain, that she is never again to interfere on the part of America. Till this shall be procured, nothing ought to be

be done to America, but the question left implicitly at rest. When it shall be procured, I have not a doubt that the matter will be brought into as desirable a situation as we can now expect. America will offer to agree with Great Britain upon terms such as Great Britain may accept; for it cannot admit of a doubt, that Great Britain can, with dignity and propriety, accept of much less when offered by America than she can with dignity and propriety offer in the first instance to America. Having laid down what I would recommend as the mode of proceeding, I think I can venture to conjecture with some degree of probability, that terms will be offered by America.

When the troops of Great Britain shall be withdrawn, when the object that occupied them shall cease to exist, it is more than probable that differences will take place between different Colonies, and may even find their way into the Congress itself. In this situation it is hardly to be doubted, that finding their great and good ally, the French King, unable to assist them any longer, attributing (with that change of sentiment, which a change of fortune generally begets, especially in the midst of popular tumult) all their evils to his intervention and to his intrigue, they will chace away his Ambassador with indignation,
equal

equal to the cordiality with which they received him, and will be happy to take refuge once more in the arms of Britain. Upon this supposition, it may be proper to consider upon what terms Great Britain ought to close with America.

Great Britain has, by the Conciliatory Bills, given up the original subject of contest between her and America, and those, I suppose, she does not mean to repeal. The only question that remains is with respect to a nominal dependence. If America then should offer to come into such terms as would avoid a total separation, and secure a constant and reciprocal support between the two countries, so that the strength of the one country, should be the strength of the other, and their interests so closely united, that nothing could separate them, I would give up the nominal dependency to procure such an union. Taxation nobody now thinks of; and the article of altering their Government is equally given up. Why then should we hesitate at their retaining the form of Government they themselves have established, providing they agree to the union of interests above hinted at? What I would propose to unite their interests, I shall proceed to state. That the natives of America should be natives of Great Britain, and upon coming to this country,

country, should enjoy all the privileges of British subjects as they did formerly. That in the same manner, the natives of Great Britain should, upon going to America, be entitled to all the privileges of American subjects. That the ports of the one nation should be reciprocally open to the other. That the prerogative of declaring peace and war should remain in the King of Great Britain ; every other sovereign power within America being allowed to remain in Congress, upon the footing in which it now stands, viz. the internal defence of America, by which the army and navy remains in their power ; the appointment of every civil and military officer ; and, in short, the whole power of supporting and regulating their Government, with the single exception above-mentioned. By this means the dreadful addition of influence which the Crown would have got with the patronage of America will be totally avoided. If this regulation should take place, I should think a Council, or Agents, ought to be appointed by the King to reside in America, to take care of the interests of this country in America ; and in the same manner, a Council, or Agents, should be appointed by the Congress to reside in Great Britain, to take care of the interests of America here, with competent salaries, appointed by their respective countries. By this

equal to the cordiality with which they received him, and will be happy to take refuge once more in the arms of Britain. Upon this supposition, it may be proper to consider upon what terms Great Britain ought to close with America.

Great Britain has, by the Conciliatory Bills, given up the original subject of contest between her and America, and those, I suppose, she does not mean to repeal. The only question that remains is with respect to a nominal dependence. If America then should offer to come into such terms as would avoid a total separation, and secure a constant and reciprocal support between the two countries, so that the strength of the one country, should be the strength of the other, and their interests so closely united, that nothing could separate them, I would give up the nominal dependency to procure such an union. Taxation nobody now thinks of; and the article of altering their Government is equally given up. Why then should we hesitate at their retaining the form of Government they themselves have established, providing they agree to the union of interests above hinted at? What I would propose to unite their interests, I shall proceed to state. That the natives of America should be natives of Great Britain, and upon coming to this country,

country, should enjoy all the privileges of British subjects as they did formerly. That in the same manner, the natives of Great Britain should, upon going to America, be entitled to all the privileges of American subjects. That the ports of the one nation should be reciprocally open to the other. That the prerogative of declaring peace and war should remain in the King of Great Britain; every other sovereign power within America being allowed to remain in Congress, upon the footing in which it now stands, viz. the internal defence of America, by which the army and navy remains in their power; the appointment of every civil and military officer; and, in short, the whole power of supporting and regulating their Government, with the single exception above-mentioned. By this means the dreadful addition of influence which the Crown would have got with the patronage of America will be totally avoided. If this regulation should take place, I should think a Council, or Agents, ought to be appointed by the King to reside in America, to take care of the interests of this country in America; and in the same manner, a Council, or Agents, should be appointed by the Congress to reside in Great Britain, to take care of the interests of America here, with competent salaries, appointed by their respective countries. By this

this means the strength of Great Britain would become the strength of America, and the strength of America would be the strength of Great Britain. That dread and terror which constantly hangs over my mind, that America is to ruin us by drawing away our people, getting possession of the West-Indies, Newfoundland, and Quebec, and becoming more powerful than us at sea, would be in a great measure, if not entirely, removed. But even if matters were brought to that point, where such regulations could be made, there must still remain great difficulty in the arrangement of particulars.

Nothing is attended with greater nicety than new regulations of Government, and no measure ought to be taken with greater diffidence. Even where similar circumstances give authority for similar institutions, there are so many small variations imperceptible to human penetration, that the effect of them can hardly be foretold. When the situation is entirely new, and neither the knowledge of past events, nor a variety of actual experience, can furnish out instances of the same nature, it must encrease the difficulty to such a degree, as to render the boldest politician timorous. This last is so much the situation of the present subject, that it is with the utmost diffidence

diffidence I submit my thoughts to the public. As probable conjecture of what may be the effect of these regulations is all we can arrive at, I am sensible that it will be very easy to offer such objections to this scheme of Union as may prevent its ever receiving a serious consideration. Many of these objections readily occur to myself; partial I may be supposed to be to my own plans, yet to most of them, I think, I can give a satisfactory answer.

1. It has been said, that America, France, and Spain, will prove too strong for Great Britain; that Great Britain was victorious in the last war; but to what did she owe her victories? To the assistance and support she received from her Colonies. Without disputing the last part of the proposition, which I think too might be disputed, I shall consider the first part of it. If by this is meant, that Great Britain will not be able to cope with America, France, and Spain, while she continues to make an expensive war upon the continent of America, that I can easily allow, because the expence of that war alone, from its distance, and from its being in an enemy's country, is immense; and that expence must now be greatly encreased by the additional risques to which we are exposed from the depredations of the French: but if we do not

I

continue

continue hostilities in the American Colonies, there is no reason to apprehend that France, Spain and America, will be an over-match for Great Britain. The same annual expence, which was laid out in the American quarrel, will be sufficient to carry on the naval war proposed, and enable us to out-number our adversaries in ships of the line; and I am apt to think that the depredations of our King's ships and privateers, if they do not supply us with funds, will certainly supply us with spirit to pursue it. We know very well from former trials what France and Spain can effect; and the assistance of America in such a war, considering her present circumstances, will be of little importance: they have no ships of great size, and are not yet in a condition to fit them out; besides, when they learn our intention of giving no disturbance to their trade, it is probable that, in their present exhausted condition, they will yield but a feeble assistance to their allies.

2. It may be supposed that the Americans will not yield up that material point of sovereignty to the King of Great Britain, the power of making peace and war; and that they will not choose to be involved in every quarrel in which our Sovereign may choose to be engaged. It is likely, however, that after so long a course of warfare,
America

America will be inclined to relinquish this point, especially if they find that France is no longer able to protect them ; besides, they can hardly suspect that Great Britain, so burthened with taxes, will be disposed wantonly to distress America, by engaging in groundless quarrels, which must prove oppressive to herself. It is likewise to be observed, that the Americans are left with the sole power of finding supplies upon such occasions, and may withhold them whenever they see cause for it.

But it will be said, where then is the advantage to Great Britain, if America withholds the supplies for the war? Great Britain, without any advantage received, will bear the whole burthen. Here I should think the interest of America would lead her to be as liberal as she can ; her trade and territory are always liable to be attacked by the enemies of Great Britain ; so that if she is thus united with Great Britain, self-defence must lead her to defend both ; in this way she is forced to give us a naval assistance ; and by defending her own territory, she saves us from what she formerly cost us defending her with our troops. Great Britain, I trust, will always be able to defend herself, as well as the territories she may possess abroad ; and may into the bargain be able to make descents upon the dependencies of her neighbours, either for the sake of terror

or diversion. As to a Continental war, I never wish to see us engaged in it; and, therefore, never can think it expedient to provide for it. Besides, if America has a mutual interest with this country in the West-India islands and our fisheries, and provides her proportion for the defence of them, the interests of the two countries will still be more closely united, and neither England nor America will dare to allow each other to be molested by foreign powers, without running the risque of ruining their interest in those valuable possessions. But it may be said by America, that if she shall be injured in her property by foreign nations, the King of Great Britain, by not declaring war, may avoid avenging her injuries for the sake of sparing Great Britain. To this I would answer first of all; the American Council will always have it in their power to represent the affairs of America, and it would be an odious measure for Britain to refuse their assistance upon a proper representation. In the next place, it is the interest of Great Britain to assist America in every such case, for the same reason that it is the interest of America to assist Great Britain. The enemies of both will, by depredations upon the nation that shall incline to be neuter, force them to defend themselves.

The Americans might farther say, Why may we not have a share, at least, in the power

power of making peace and war? Might not our Congress have a communication of that Sovereignty? But how is it possible, at the distance at which we are situated, to fall upon any method, by which to communicate this power, and how could a Council ever be appointed to manage that matter, without such jarring and absurdity as would render their interference inadequate and ridiculous. It must also occur, that a numerous body, like the Congress, can never be so fit for this part of execution as a single person.

3. The third objection is, That giving the natives of this country the privileges of Americans, upon going to that country, will operate like a bounty upon emigration from this country, and induce the inhabitants of Great Britain to settle in America more rapidly than if that country was disunited and hostile. This, I make no doubt, would, in part, be the effect of this union, and for this very reason, I think it might operate as an inducement to America to enter into it with cordiality. Nor can an encrease of emigration, in this event, be so great an evil, as an inferior emigration, in case of the two countries being totally separated, since the people who leave Britain to settle in America, may still be considered as a part of our strength.

4. There yet remains to this mode of settlement, an objection which will, perhaps,

haps, meet with more supporters than any that has been yet stated. I mean that it is proposed, by this settlement, to give up the exclusive trade, which this nation has enjoyed with America. To this trade has been generally attributed the late splendor and encreasing wealth of this country. Statesmen, merchants, and political writers, however much they may have differed in other points, have, till very lately, been unanimously agreed about this.

In answer to this Objection, I would ask, Is there any person, who is now so sanguine as to flatter himself, that this country can now retain the exclusive right to that trade? No person, I imagine, believes, that in the present posture of affairs, this is practicable.

But I will venture to go a step farther, and to assert, that the loss of this exclusive trade will not be so detrimental to Great Britain, as has been generally apprehended. This point, is, in my opinion, clearly established by two late authors * on that subject, whose

* Dean Tucker was the first that published upon this subject. But the argument is more fully handled by Dr. Smith, in his inquiry into the nature and causes of the wealth of nations. A work which contains more original genius, sound reasoning, and profound knowledge, and what is more valuable than any of them, more independence of thought than almost any work the world is possessed of. The author has been equally bold and successful in combating vulgar and received

whose writings have excited the public attention. As the reasoning of those eminent writers is well known, it would be a trespass upon the reader's time, if I was to state their arguments at full length. I shall only state in few words, the result of what they appeared to me to have completely proved.

1. There seems great reason to doubt, whether the trade of America was ever so beneficial to Great Britain as has been commonly imagined. That the advancement of Britain, as a commercial country, has kept pace with her progress in the settling the American Colonies, cannot I think be denied. But it seems also evident, that when those Colonies became considerable, our merchants were induced, by the prospect of monopoly to quit the trade of Europe, in which they had been formerly engaged, and to turn their capitals into that of America; and though this latter trade was evidently more profitable to the merchant, there is good ground to suspect that it was not so to the nation; because, as it yielded a more distant return of commodi-

ceived opinions, upon many points; and in spite of all that has been written upon political œconomy, he has greatly improved and added to that important science. If the reader, who is unacquainted with this work, shall find me dark and unintelligible, he has only to consult it, B. 4. C. vii. part 3. to receive perfect satisfaction and great instruction.

ties,

ties, it could not support so great a degree of industry at home. No proposition appears better founded than this, that a near trade, which affords quick returns, is, if other circumstances are equal, calculated to produce the greatest quantity of manufactures, and, therefore, to give the greatest employment to industry. No trade, however, ever yielded slower returns than that of America.

2. Admitting the trade of America to have been ever so beneficial to Great Britain, it seems evident that by far the greatest and most beneficial part of this trade would remain, though the restrictive laws with respect to it were totally removed. The best part of the trade between Britain and America, consists in the exchange of those articles which are produced by the two countries cheaper and better than in other part of the world. In the greater part of manufactures with which Britain supplies America, there is no danger that, for a long time at least, she can be rivalled by other nations, as might easily be shewn by an enumeration of all our most common branches of manufacture. All this trade, therefore, is totally independent of our monopoly with America, and it would be carried on even to a greater extent, if that monopoly were abolished, because the fear of competition would be apt to produce

duce a greater exertion of industry in our mercantile people.

3. With respect to those articles, with which we supply the American market, and with which, by our own labour, we cannot furnish so cheap as our neighbours, it merits attention. First, That as our interest requires we should purchase those manufactures from other neighbouring nations, the mercantile profit which we draw upon the sale of them to America, arises merely from the carriage of those goods, and is therefore, comparatively, of little importance. Secondly, That as not only America, but all the world besides, has an interest to smuggle those commodities, we must of necessity, from the distance and extent of the American coast, incur a very exorbitant charge in preventing frauds of that nature; and after all, it is obvious, that the efforts we make for this purpose can have little effect. So that in spite of all we can do, the smuggled trade, in these articles, will always be very considerable.

From these considerations, it should seem no difficult matter to persuade us, in our present circumstances, to make a *virtue* of *necessity*, and to yield up, without murmuring, those restrictive regulations, which are far from having that beneficial tendency

K commonly

commonly supposed, and which appear, upon a strict examination, to have proceeded from narrow prejudices, and partial motives of interest, rather than from any extensive and liberal views of policy.

If the objections which occur to the mode of union proposed, are in any degree obviated, let us consider next what material advantages this union will produce to both countries; for unless the advantages are mutual, we need not hope to find advocates on either side of the Atlantic.

With respect to America, except in one instance, it seems to give them every thing for which they have fought lately, and much more than they demanded at the commencement of hostilities. They will have an unmolested communication of trade with all the world, besides the West-Indies being thrown open to them. They will have British protection against foreign insult, whenever that shall happen. The Government then will be more secure, and as free as if they had no connection with Great Britain, because the whole civil and military sovereignty is in the power of the Congress and subordinate assemblies in America: and every object of ambition, of interest, and of fame, will remain entire to those who shall wish to pursue them.

With

With regard to this country, I cannot help thinking that this mode of union will also have its advantages. Nothing can be so impolitic as to extend the territory of a country, without extending the means of supporting and defending it. The policy, therefore, which laid the whole of the support and defence of America on Great Britain, ought not, since America has become a great and populous country, to be any longer retained. The expence of the civil Government of any country is very insignificant in comparison of its military Government: the expence of the first America herself was very capable of defraying *; the expence of the second fell entirely, with very trifling exceptions, upon Great Britain. Without reckoning the expence of the last war, or entering into the question of, whether that war ought to be stated to the account of America, the peace establishment for the Colonies was very considerable; besides guards and garrisons, the number of vessels necessary to prevent smuggling was immense. By the system proposed here, all those inconveniences will be remoy-

* It is unnecessary here to enter into the trifling exceptions of Governors salaries, and the different regulations of different provinces respecting their civil Government. They are of no use in this discussion, and every body knows that America is sufficiently apprized of them.

ed; America will defray the expence of every establishment, civil and military; and Great Britain, besides the trade she may have with America, in common with the rest of the world, and perhaps in preference to it, because she has been thrown, by the American monopoly, into manufactures adapted to the American market, will have all the strength of America to assist her upon every emergency.

But, however beneficial this agreement may be to the two countries, there is still one obstacle remaining. The Ministers of this country, even in the abject concessions they have made, have never aimed at quitting with the patronage of America. Always desirous of maintaining what enables them to oblige their dependents, and secures them in the possession of their offices, they will be unwilling to adopt a system which deprives them of so extensive a power to oblige, and may diminish their political influence. Without entering into the real advantages to the country, attending the depriving the Ministers of the Crown of this additional means of Corruption, advantages glaringly manifest to all who value the liberty of their country, it does not seem to me possible that the most sanguine, or the most ignorant Minister, can now entertain the
hope

hope of reaping any advantage from the disposal of places in America.

Whether the necessary step to carry that plan into execution (the beating the French at sea, the ruining their trade, and molesting their possessions in the West-Indies) is practicable, or what means will make it practicable, is the only question that now remains. When I contemplate the spirit of the nation, and reflect on the actions of individuals, for these last five months, I cannot entertain a doubt of our success in these particulars. When I look back upon the conduct of our Ministers, for the last five years, every thing appears so dark and uncertain, that it is difficult to say to what side we should turn for relief.

F I N I S.

hope of reaping any advantage from the dis-
posal of places in America.
Whether the necessary step to carry this
plan into execution (the bearing the French
at least, the raising their trade, and molesting
their possessions in the West-Indies) is prac-
ticable, or what means will make it practi-
cable is the only question that now remains.
When I contemplate the spirit of the nation,
and reflect on the actions of individuals, for
those last few months, I cannot entertain
a doubt of our success in this particular.
When I look at the conduct of our
Ministers, for the last year, every thing
appears so well concerted, that it is
difficult to say, how we should turn
for relief.



